



U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary

F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr., Chairman

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News Advisory

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Committee Approves Bipartisan Internet Freedom and Nondiscrimination Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The House Judiciary Committee today by a 20-to-13 margin, with one Member voting present, approved bipartisan legislation sponsored by House Judiciary Committee Chairman F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr. (R-Wis.) and Ranking Member John Conyers, Jr. (D-Mich.) to preserve Internet freedom and competition.

“The Committee – in a bipartisan fashion – understands that this legislation will provide an insurance policy for Internet users against being harmed by broadband network operators abusing their market power to discriminate against content and service providers. While I am not opposed to providers responsibly managing their networks and providing increased bandwidth to those consumers who wish to pay for it, I am opposed to providers giving faster, more efficient access to certain service providers at the expense of others. This legislation is a must for any telecommunications legislation because it will ensure that this type of discriminatory conduct will not take place, and will help to continue the tradition of innovation and competition that has defined the Internet,” stated Chairman Sensenbrenner.

Ranking Member Conyers added, “Reporting this legislation from the Judiciary Committee is an important step to preserve the right and freedom of Internet users to access their chosen content online. The Internet has flourished because its users’ unfettered access has created a marketplace responsive to consumers. Without the nondiscrimination protections provided in this bill, the Internet could become a place where corporate executives may determine what content and services are available. We cannot wait until consumers lose the right to access Internet content freely.”

H.R. 5417, the “Internet Freedom and Nondiscrimination Act” will give certainty to entrepreneurs, investors, and others who seek to deliver innovative ideas to market that they may do so without fearing discrimination. Specifically, this bill would amend the Clayton

Act to require that network providers: 1) interconnect with the facilities of other network providers on a reasonable and nondiscriminatory basis; 2) operate their network in a reasonable and nondiscriminatory manner such that non-affiliated providers of content, services and applications have an equal opportunity to reach consumers; and 3) refrain from interfering with users' ability to choose the lawful content, services and applications they want to use.

The Committee unanimously approved a bipartisan manager's amendment by Chairman Sensenbrenner with Ranking Member Conyers to further clarify that nothing in the legislation restricts broadband networks from offering controls to protect against the transmission of objectionable content or manage their networks in a nondiscriminatory manner.

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